

# Great Milton Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Great Milton Parish Council (GMPC) held at the Pavilion on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024, at 7.30pm

Present: B Fox (Vice-chair), M Horsley (MH), D Harms (DH) and A Noble (AN)

In attendance: Allison Leigh (Locum Clerk), and two members of the public.

**126/24 Apologies for Absence:** Stephen Harrod (Chair), Councillor Sarah MacMahon, Cllr Georgina Heritage (SODC)

**127/24 Variation of order of business:** The Council resolved to move item 139/24 further up the Agenda.

**128/24 Declarations of members' interest (if any):** None

## **129/24 Reports**

### **South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)**

The District Councillor sent a report. See Attachment 1.

There were no other reports.

### **130/24 Correspondence and Public Discussion**

There was no correspondence to note. Two members of the public were in attendance one of whom was the Neighbourhood Watch coordinator.

### **131/24 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 were agreed and signed.

### **132/24 Actions from the previous meeting:**

DH reported that there is no update on the South and Vale Local Plan other than to note that the working group is ensuring they are up to date in submitting all necessary responses.

DH reported he is working on setting up a meeting regarding school parking. The meeting will most likely take place in during December.

**139/24 Security in the village:** The Neighbourhood Watch coordinator was in attendance. He noted the issue at the Manoir, which was noted at the October meeting, regarding stolen apples and a beehive.

He also noted that there have been people ringing doorbells and running off, but there has not been a need to involve the police.

### **133/24 Planning Applications:**

**A: Planning Amendments:** The Council considered the following planning applications:

#### **[P24/S1077/FUL](#)**

Mount Pleasant Farm, Thame Road, Great Milton

The amendment is for additional BNG information received 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024

This application has been withdrawn.

**P22/S3280/FUL**

Road Maintenance Depot London Road Milton Common OX9 2JN

Major Amendment : No. 3 - dated 4th November 2024

Proposal : The erection of a single storey office block, maintenance garages and salt barn at the western end of the existing depot site, and the creation of new access and SUDS pond. (As amplified by additional information received 6 October 2022 and amended by Plans and information received 31 March 2023 including revised site location plan and as amended and amplified by information received 04 November 2024).

The Council has no further comments on this planning application.

**B: Planning Decisions:** The Council noted the following planning decisions:

**P24/S2739/HH**

The Old Vicarage, Church Road, Great Milton

Rebuild existing external garden wall to same length as it currently stands and to a consistent height matching original height of wall

Permission granted.

**P24/S2871/LDE**

Milton Pools Fishery near Milton Common

Erection of 2 x extensions to main building (Units 2 and 4); erection of building (Unit 3)

SODC determined the above application is lawful.

**C: Waterstock Planning Appeal:** The Council agreed to support Waterstock Parish Council in their opposition to the Appeal by developers seeking to redevelop the golf course. The Council resolved to make a contribution of £500 towards their Appeal costs.

**D: Oxfordshire County Council Planning Reference LL.0119/24:** The Council resolved not to consider a response to the consultation.

**134/24 Finance**

A Payments authorised

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Element</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Cheque number</u>	<u>Power to Spend</u>
Shield Maintenance	Dog bin emptying	92.82	18/11/24	Cheque 2438	Open Spaces Act 1906 s 10
Hope after Harm (The Thames Valley Partnership)	Donation	50.00	18/11/24	Cheque 2441	Local Government Act (LGA) s137
Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice	Donation	50.00	18/11/24	Cheque 2442	LGA 1972 s 142
Allison Leigh	Locum Clerk – October(14/10 – 31/10/24)	420.00	18/11/24	Cheque 2443	LGA 1972 s 112
Allison Leigh	Locum Clerk –	51.30	18/11/24	Cheque	LGA 1972

	expenses			2443	s111
Allison Leigh	Locum Clerk – November	630.00	30/11/24	Cheque 2444	LGA 1972 s 112
Bibby Commercial Finance Limited (Tactical Facilities Management)	Grounds maintenance	624.89	18/11/24	Cheque 2445	Open Spaces Act 1906 s 10
Alan Pickett	Postage and council recording equipment	47.18	18/11/24	Cheque 2446	LGA 1972 s 111
Hugo Fox	Website	23.99	12/10/24 (invoice date)	Direct Debit	LGA 1972 s 142
BT office/email package	Office 365	14.38	11/10/24	Direct Debit	LGA 1972 s 111

- B The Council agreed and the Vice Chair signed the monthly bank reconciliation, accounts and bank statements
- C **Donation requests:** The Council considered the following donation requests:  
i. Freecycle: AN confirmed that the Sheppard Trust have funded pavilion hire costs for Freecycle in the past. AN to liaise with Miranda Cook and suggest she approaches Jane Willis of the Sheppard Trust in the first instance.  
ii. The Howe Trust Christmas Hamper Campaign: The Council resolved to donate £100 to the Howe Trust Christmas Hamper Campaign.
- D **Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2024/25:** The Council noted the 2024/2025 increase backdated to 1/4/24.
- E **2025/2026 Budget:** The Council considered the draft 2025/2026 and made a few edits. The Council would like this on the December agenda.
- F **Unity Trust Bank:** The Council resolved to switch banks to Unity Trust Bank using online banking. The Council resolved the following as signatories: Stephen Harrod, Bill Fox and Andy Noble.

The Council resolved for the Locum Clerk, Allison Leigh, to be the account administrator.

- 135/24 Switchover to .gov.uk domain (emails and website):** The Council resolved for the email addresses to be [first.last@greatmilton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:first.last@greatmilton-pc.gov.uk). The Clerk will work with Parish Online to set these up. The Council considered the switch over date to the new website. MH will look at both sites for consideration.
- 136/24 Grounds maintenance contract:** The Council considered the post-trial arrangement with Tactical Facilities Management. The Council have a signed contract with Tactical Facilities Management for the provision of grass cutting services through until February 2026, subject to 3 months' notice to terminate by either party at any time. The Council would like to set up a meeting with Tactical Facilities Management to discuss the service received this Summer. The Vice Chair will arrange to meet with the Director and any councillors who would like to attend.

A member of the public noted that, in some places, the verges are cut too short to the point where the soil is exposed.

The Council considered obtaining a quote from another contractor for the grass cutting works for its grass maintenance needs. The Clerk advised delaying seeking quotes until after the meeting with Tactical Facilities Management. The Council resolved to proceed with obtaining quotes.

- 137/24 Oxfordshire County Council Bus Data Capture Exercise:** The Council considered the exercise and resolved not to respond. However, the Council would like for OCC to inform GMPC if a parishioner chooses to participate.
- 138/24 Plans for redevelopment of Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons:** There is no update, but the Chair is meeting with them in November.
- 140/24 The Bulletin:** The Clerk is working with the editor to obtain more clarity about the process.
- 141/24 Items for next agenda or information only:** It was noted that the carol service will take place at 6pm on Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> December on the Green, with mulled wine and mince pies at the Bull afterwards. DH/MH to liaise re tree purchase with a maximum budget of £250.
- 142/24 Confidential item:** The Council resolved to exclude members of the public from agenda item 143/24 due to its confidential nature.
- 143/24 2024/2024 Internal Audit:** The Council considered quotes for the 2024/2025 audit and resolved to proceed with Jane Olds.

***The next meeting of Great Milton Parish Council will be held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December starting at 7.30pm in The Pavilion.***

The meeting closed at 8:30pm

**SIGNED**

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## Attachment 1

District Councillor Report  
Haseley Brook ward  
07 November 2024  
Cllr Georgina Heritage

### **Meetings and Council Activity**

On 24th October a full council meeting saw members vote in favour of Neighbourhood Development Plans for four South Oxon villages (which I was pleased to propose to council on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Planning), and council also resolved four motions.

Perhaps the most impassioned and unifying motion of the evening was the vote of no confidence in Thames Water, with councillors of all parties unanimously calling for the water provider to be brought back under public control. Council members highlighted widespread concerns over Thames Water's environmental and financial mismanagement and their inability to meet key operational standards affecting residents and local ecosystems.

The motion emphasised the need for government intervention through the Water Industry Act 1991, which allows companies to be placed into Special Administration when they are in financial distress or fail to meet essential duties.

So far in 2024, untreated sewage has been discharged into the River Thames or its tributaries from sewage treatment works operated by Thames Water for more than 15,500 hours. This pollution is symptomatic of deeper issues within the company, with nearly two-thirds of Thames Water's sewage treatment facilities reportedly out of compliance with regulatory permits. Beyond pollution concerns, Thames Water's infrastructure challenges are also significant. The company loses about a quarter of the region's public drinking water supply due to its leaks. It is also struggling to manage an £18 billion debt that has led credit agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's to downgrade Thames Water's debt rating to "junk" status.

The council's motion specifically calls on the government to end water industry privatisation, citing it as a "failed experiment" that has led to increased financial and environmental risks.

In addition to calling for Thames Water to be brought back under public ownership, SODC is backing amendments to the Water (Special Measures) Bill, now progressing through Parliament. These amendments include:

- Halting any public bailouts for the water industry as proposed under Section 10 of the Bill;
- Restructuring Ofwat's duties to prioritise public and environmental interests;
- Re-democratising water company boards to include employees, bill payers, and council representatives.

The council also resolved a motion on supporting communities in their efforts to retain pubs; a motion on the need for an urgent review of local government funding; and a motion on the importance of local government in delivering Net Zero.

## **Councillor Grant Scheme**

We want to benefit residents with fantastic community projects through the councillor grant scheme, so please don't forget applications close at midday on the 29 November 2024, and please share this information with any community groups which might benefit. The Haseley Brook pot is currently under subscribed! For more information please don't hesitate to get in touch, and you can find details via the SODC website: [Councillor Community Grant Scheme 2024/25 - open - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

## **Proposed changes to Council Tax premium on long term empty properties**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have launched a public survey on proposals to reduce the minimum timeframe to charge a council tax premium on long-term empty properties.

Currently, the councils allow a maximum duration of up to two years for a domestic property to remain unoccupied and substantially unfurnished before an additional, long-term empty council tax 'premium' charge is incurred, on top of the normal full 100 per cent charge. Recent changes in council tax legislation now allow councils to reduce this minimum timeframe from two years to just one year. If this change is adopted, a new policy on long-term empty properties would come into effect from 1 April 2026 – to allow sufficient time for empty property owners to plan or adjust their plans accordingly.

The long-term aim of the proposal is to see as many homes brought back into use as soon as possible.

Residents can have their say via the online survey: [Proposed changes to the additional Council Tax charge for long-term empty properties - South Oxfordshire District Council - Join the conversation - South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse - Citizen Space](#)

This survey is open for six weeks and will close at 11.59pm on Tuesday 26 November.

## **First Habitat Bank created in South Oxon**

South Oxfordshire District Council is proud to announce it has helped create the first habitat bank in the district aiming to increase biodiversity and reduce river pollution while also allowing necessary development.

The council has worked with the environmental charity Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) and a local landowner on plans to transform 16.5 acres off Windmill Lane, Towersey from intensively farmed arable land to a biodiverse mosaic of grassland, scrub, and woodland habitats. This will provide a haven for pollinators such as bees and butterflies, mammals including water voles and birds such as curlews and barn owls. 3

The new habitat bank will provide a stable income for the landowner through biodiversity net gain, making the rest of their farm business more resilient in the face of a changing climate.

The owner of the land at Towersey first heard about biodiversity net gain – where developers buy biodiversity credits from habitat banks to offset building works – when

they attended the farm innovation show in 2022. They then worked with TOE to develop the project and liaise with the council as the local planning authority.

The site is next to the Thame Valley Conservation Target Area, a strategically valuable area for nature recovery. Over the coming decades, the land will be managed to allow wildflowers to bloom and set seed in the summer, with an annual hay cut in the autumn. This will create habitat and food for a host of wildlife species in an arable-dominated landscape.

By removing the land from intensive agricultural production, fewer chemicals from pesticides and fertiliser and less sediment will run into the Cuttle Brook that runs on the northern border of the site, improving the health of one of the River Thame's main tributaries.